

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 05549 041451Z

ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7940

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SOPN, KE

SUBJECT: DAILY NATION EDITOR RESIGNS

1. NATION NEWSPAPERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS YESTERDAY ACCEPTED RESIGNATION OF NATION EDITOR-IN-CHIEF GEORGE GITHII ON "MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE HELD BY BOTH SIDES." NAIROBI STANDARD REPORTED TODAY THAT NATION STAFF MEMBERS "DEMANDED WRITTEN APOLOGY FROM (MAJORITY STOCKHOLDER) AGA KHAN WITHIN 48 HOURS FOR INSINUATING THAT PAPER WAS IRRESPONSIBLE, INTOLERANT, UNWISE AND UNUNDERSTANDING." GITHII RESIGNATION LETTER, PUBLISHED LOCAL WOMEN'S MAGAZINE "VIVA," REFERS TO "EDITORIAL PREPARED BY H.H. AGA KHAN FOR PUBLICATION IN "DAILY NATION" AND SAYS "ENCROACHMENT BY CHIEF SHAREHOLDER UPON SACRED EDITORIAL SPACE AMOUNTS TO DIRECT INTERFERENCE WITH EDITORIAL INTEGRITY AND PRESS FREEDOM." LETTER CITES TWO PREVIOUS INSTANCES OF SUCH "INTERFERENCE": ONCE WHEN AGA KHAN "SOUGHT TO HAVE EDITORIAL WITHDRAWN BECAUSE IT REFERRED TO GENERAL DE GAULLE AND AGA KHAN LIVES IN PARIS": AGAIN DURING 1974 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS BECAUSE "HE (AGA KHAN) WAS AGAINST LATE DR. JOHNSTONE MUTHIORA AND IN FAVOR OF DR. NJOROGI MUNGAI." PRESENT

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PAGE 02 NAIROB 05549 041451Z

INTERFERENCE, RESIGNATION LETTER SAYS, IS "BECAUSE NATION HAS WRITTEN ABOUT BOHRA COMMUNITY, WHO ARE SHIA MUSLIMS, AND AGA KHAN'S COMMUNITY ARE SHIA MUSLIMS, SO THERE IS CLOSE RELIGIOUS AFFINITY BETWEEN THE TWO ISLAMIC SECTS." BITHII CHARGES "AGA KHAN'S OFFICE HAS PERSISTENTLY SOUGHT TO PERSUADE NATION TO TAKE PRO-ARAB AND ANTI-ISRAELI LINE WHICH I HAVE RESISTED

AS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE."

2. STANDARD REPORT SAYS NATION STAFF, "AFTER HOUR-LONG MEETING ADDRESSED BY OFFICIALS OF KENYA UNION OF JOURNALISTS," ALSO DEMANDED THAT "AGA KHAN STOP WHAT IT CALLED PRESS NEO-COLONIALISM IN ATTEMPTING TO RUN KENYA PRESS FROM PARIS."

3. WHILE GITHII ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE AMONG SHARPEST JOURNALISTIC MINDS IN COUNTRY, THERE HAS BEEN SOME DISGRUNTLEMENT AMONG FOREIGN PRESS REPS FOR WHAT SOME SEE AS NATION PRACTICE OF PUBLISHING INSUFFICIENTLY CONFIRMED STORIES, PARTICULARLY ON UGANDA. GITHII IS GOOD FRIEND OF WEST (BUT CRITIC OF AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG), STAUNCH SUPPORTER OUR POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, ARTICULATE WRITER OF ANTI-COMMUNIST EDITORIALS.

4. JOE RODRIGUES, MANAGING EDITOR OF NATION, HAS BEEN APPOINTED ACTING GROUP EDITOR-IN-CHIEF. GITHII'S FUTURE ROLE UNCLEAR BUT MANY RUMORS IN CIRCULATION. USIS LEARNED HE NOW ON COAST, PROBABLY IN TOUCH WITH PRESIDENT KENYATTA THERE. BECAUSE OF HIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOK LEADERSHIP, FUTURE ROLE IN GOVERNMENT NOT UNLIKELY IN VIEW LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES KENYA JOURNALISM.

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PAGE 03     NAIROB 05549 041451Z

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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